



Hebron School, Ooty,  
Tamil Nadu, India

# PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

FOR VISITORS TO HEBRON SCHOOL  
IN MARCH – APRIL 2024

Celebrating 125 years  
of Hebron School



1899 – 2024  
CELEBRATING 125 YEARS  
OF HEBRON SCHOOL

*Disclaimer: We have done our best to provide accurate information and advice but cannot take responsibility for any unintentional misinformation, and this includes medical advice for which, as in all areas, the visitor is wholly responsible.*

# TRAVELLING TO INDIA

Coimbatore	Kozhikode (Calicut)	Kochi (Cochin)
A few international airlines fly or connect into Coimbatore, our closest airport. <i>About 3 hours drive.</i> <i>*Taxi: approx. INR 2100/-</i>	Some international airlines fly into Cochin. <i>About 4 hours drive.</i> <i>*Taxi: approx. INR 5000/-</i>	Some international airlines fly into Cochin, eg. Air India. <i>About 7 hours drive. *Taxi: approx. INR 6500/-</i>
Bengaluru (Bangalore)	Trichy	Delhi or Mumbai (please avoid booking domestic connecting flight separately)
Several international airlines fly into Bangalore. <i>About 7 hours drive.</i> <i>*Taxi: approx. INR 7500/-</i>	Some international airlines fly into Trichy. <i>About 7 hours drive.</i> <i>*Taxi: approx. INR 6500/-</i>	You will need a connecting flight to one of the above cities. Please make sure your baggage allowance is sufficient on the connecting flight so as to avoid surprises.

Whichever way you approach Ooty, you will be driving up windy roads with hairpin bends. If you suffer from motion sickness, please bring travel sickness tablets for the drive up the mountain and be prepared for stunning views! The school can give suggestions for taxi drivers – recommendations will be sent by email, so please keep an eye out for our monthly newsletter. Also, you can easily book a state-run cab or taxi service from inside the airport terminal. If you need more information do not forget to write to Mr. Stanly, External Partnership Officer at [alumni@hebronooty.org](mailto:alumni@hebronooty.org). You will be added to the database for regular updates.



*\*Subject to change*

# ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL

## **VISAS**

You will need a Tourist Visa, which can be applied online. Prices depend on the country from which you are applying. Apply well in advance of travel, be prepared for a lengthy form, to have passport size photos relevant for India (if you apply in person) and ensure your passport has at least six months validity. The visa starts from the day of issue (not the day you fly) and they are usually valid for a year.

## **MEDICAL AND TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Make sure your vaccinations are up to date: Typhoid, for example, is essential. Malaria is absent in Ooty (owing to the altitude), but you may want to consider bug creams when travelling through the plains. Please consult your local pharmacists or doctors for advice. **Visitors are wholly responsible for providing sufficient prescribed medicines (etc.) for their trip.** If any urgent medical treatment is needed whilst in Ooty, the school may be able to suggest a suitable doctor or hospital, but this will remain the responsibility of the visitor.

You should make sure that your travel insurance is valid for the whole of your stay and covers emergencies such as surgery and medical evacuation to your home country. The insurance cost will depend on what cover you choose, and whether you are bringing valuable items such as a camera, mobile phone or a laptop.

# ARRIVING IN INDIA

## **CONTACT HEBRON SCHOOL**

If you need help, please call: +91 423 2225820, reception can connect you with our External Partnership Officer. Please remember that the staff are 'flat out' working for the school and so any extra request should be kept to a minimum – and please be patient.

## **CHANGING MONEY ON ARRIVAL**

Wherever you enter India there are money exchanging facilities in the airports before you leave the arrivals area, however, we suggest using ATMs whenever possible.

## **PRECAUTIONS AT THE AIRPORT**

Make sure you put your passport, money, tickets, etc. away either in a flat purse or wallet around your neck or secured in a money belt. It is easy not to bother and to carry it or have it in a loose bag, which can be easily misplaced.



# THINGS TO BRING

## **MONEY**

The Indian currency is the Indian Rupee (INR) and can be obtained at the currency exchanges in airports as you depart. If you have any cash in rupees from earlier trips to India, make sure it is still legal tender: high value notes (INR 1,000, for example) were removed from circulation and changed a few years ago. Notes available include INR 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500.

## HOW TO BRING MONEY

Visa, Switch, Maestro or Mastercard cards can be used in most places in India to pay for goods, although not at street stores, on transport for local buses and auto rickshaws nor for many tourist attraction entrance fees. It's advisable to always have some cash for this reason. Increasingly, Apple and Google Pay is a very commonly used method of payment in India. With a Visa or Maestro card you can take money out of the many ATMs in Ooty. Obviously, your bank will probably charge you for this privilege, so it would be a good idea to check the amount before you travel.

You may want to consider a bank card which allows you to charge it with Indian Rupees in advance and which can then be used like a debit card. Cards include Revolut, Wise, Monzo – but do check out their services carefully. *This is not an endorsement!* Some banks highly recommend that you inform them in advance that you are travelling abroad – but not all do. Check with your own bank.

## **TRAVEL ESSENTIALS**

Bring toilet paper or travel pack of tissues and hand sanitizer with you for your first few hours or days in India. Toilet paper is something you always need to carry around with you, as it is not normally available in public toilets. The toilets at the airport may be the best you see until you arrive in Ooty, so it is worth paying a visit before you leave the airport! You will also need to buy a bottle of drinking water for travelling up from the airport. AVOID drinking tap water and purchase sealed bottles instead.

Do bring a good water bottle with you as once you're here in Ooty you have access to clean filtered water at the school or in hotels and can always refill your bottle when going out and about. In fact, our local area, the Nilgiris, is a 'plastic free zone' so once in Ooty you can't actually buy small, bottled water! Hot cups of tea and coffee that are available at airports and train stations are safe to drink. Avoid ice as a general rule, as well as cut fruit sold at the side of the road. Make sure any food you eat is piping hot and then it should be safe to eat. Visitors to India sometimes feel safer sticking to vegetarian food while travelling.

## **CLOTHING**

- Comfortable shoes – the Lushington campus is built on a hill and much of the terrain is rocky. Ooty's pavements are also uneven in places.
- Waterproof jacket.
- Light cotton trousers for warm weather and also warmer trousers/ jeans for cold weather, indoors and at night.



- Sweaters, jumpers or fleeces. Even people from colder countries, find it cold at Hebron, as there is no central heating. The same will apply to most hotels or other residences in Ooty. You may find that you need to wrap up more warmly inside than you do outdoors, where the sun might be shining. Warm fleeces and jumpers or sweaters are essential, whichever time of year you come.
- Swimwear – Don't forget to pack swimwear, just in case you fancy a swim in the pool for old times' sake – and are properly supervised doing so.
- Good walking shoes or trainers, if you plan to do lots of walking or trekking – also useful around the town.
- There are various occasions to dress up (such as the Thanksgiving Service and the Banquet), so bring shirt, tie and trousers or a formal dress and shoes.
- You may want a face mask for crowded areas.
- High factor sunscreen (because of the high altitude it is easy to get sunburnt even if it is not very hot) – you can get good brands here now such as *Himalaya*, probably much cheaper than your home country. You can buy imported brands too.
- Basic First Aid Kit – including bug cream, rehydration medication (in case of diarrhoea) – but much is available in Ooty quite cheaply.

#### **OTHER THINGS YOU WILL PROBABLY WANT TO BRING**

1. Mobile phone – Check with your provider about coverage in India or you could face large bills for roaming calls or texts. Check with your current provider. Camera (photo printing is very cheap here). NB No photos of students/ staff please. Don't forget your phone charger! Rucksack or backpack (a small day pack is also useful).
2. Memorabilia from your Hebron days – including stories, photos, diaries, letters, etc. (especially from the last 25 years) for a possible publication later in the year. (A separate guideline will be sent for the same).
3. The taste of home is nice, like your favourite sweets, lollies or candy, although Ooty chocolate (at Modern Stores, our local one-stop shop) is good value.
4. We have one or two older hard copies of "Lonely Planet India" in the staff room, so it is not worth weighing luggage down with heavy hard copies. Also, much travel info is also now available online.
5. Laptop: Wi-Fi is readily available in most of the hotels (etc.). Most sockets in rooms allow for round and square pin plugs. Bring an adaptor if you have one (the regular Indian sockets are three-pin and round) or buy cheaply here.
6. Maps: We shall provide maps of the two campuses and also of Ooty town – but much is available online.

#### **THINGS AVAILABLE LOCALLY AND CHEAPER THAN THE WEST\***

- Flip flops or thongs and good leather shoes, although not in extra-large men's sizes.
- Most clothing such as cotton trousers, jeans, skirts, T-shirts, although not in large sizes.
- Torch or flashlight, hot water bottle, umbrella.
- Insect repellent – *Odorous*, available locally, is good.
- It is advisable to buy a plug adaptor in Ooty, as they are cheaper and more likely to fit properly! Several of our school plugs in accommodation work for all types of plugs.

Ooty is a sizeable town, with a population of around 300,000. Most things are now available here and additional things are available online and can usually be delivered to school within a week. If you are on medication, please bring your medicines with you. Many medicines are available from local pharmacies (and in emergency from Hoz). Rehydration solution and Imodium (loperamide hydrochloride) are useful in case of diarrhoea.

## STAY IN OOTY

It is the visitors' responsibility to book into accommodation. Please find suggestions in the accommodation list mailed to you. Remember that Ooty in March-May is VERY BUSY with tourists and so you may want to find somewhere reasonably close to the Lushington or Selborne campuses. Rickshaw prices can be a little steep in Ooty – and they charge extra to bring you up the drive to the front of Lushington Hall. It might be best to get off at the Botanical Garden gates and walk up! Current prices: Selborne to Lushington (INR 50)\*, Moddy's to Lushington (INR 50)\*, the Lake to Lushington (INR 200)\*.

### EATING OUT

There are many good places to eat out in the town and several of the larger hotels have good restaurants. You may prefer to eat veg only meals if you are cautious about health issues but several non-veg restaurants are also excellent. Ask for bottled or filtered water and, generally speaking, avoid ice. English is widely spoken. Some restaurants sell alcohol, not all. In the main, eating out in Ooty is not expensive compared to Western restaurants with main meals costing c. INR 300– 1000 (c.£3–£10 sterling), but often much less than this if Indian and veg meals.

### CLIMATE

However, due to the altitude, it is very easy to burn, even when it seems cloudy and not particularly hot. Remember to use sunscreen. Drink plenty of filtered water.

- The 125th Reunion (main week 1st–6th April 2024, with Easter Sunday on the 31st March) falls within the warmer, and usually drier, time of the year – but be prepared!
- Elsewhere in India it is never really cold, except in the north of India, when it can be cold during the day as well as in the evenings in December or January and can snow heavily during these months.

### CONTACTING HOME WHEN AT HEBRON

Google Meet, Zoom and Instagram all work well from school. WhatsApp is often used for communication.

# NOTES



# GET IN TOUCH

Finally, if you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to welcoming you to Hebron for the 125th Anniversary Reunion.

**Hebron School**  
**Lushington Hall, Ootacamund**  
**Tamil Nadu, India 643 001**  
**Tel. No. (+91) 423 222 5820**  
**Email: [alumni@hebronooty.org](mailto:alumni@hebronooty.org),**

*Please keep communications to busy staff members to an essential minimum! Thank you.*

Thanks and Regards,  
125th Anniversary Organising Committee  
Hebron School

The 125th Anniversary Organising Committee is chaired by Council member,  
Simon Devaraj: [simon.devarajcouncil@hebronooty.org](mailto:simon.devarajcouncil@hebronooty.org)

